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ABSTRACT

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP), which was implemented in 1994-2001, required that single-parent welfare recipients who could not find wage-paying jobs after receiving cash assistance for 30 months accept work in subsidized, minimum-wage community service employment (CSE) positions to satisfy their work requirement and improve their ability to obtain unsubsidized employment. The WRP was subjected to a comprehensive evaluation that included an analysis of data from the administrative records of its CSE component and surveys of CSE participants and their supervisors. Most CSE worksites were involved with education, public works, or social services. Although many participants were not given a choice about their CSE assignment, nearly 90% considered it very or somewhat fair that they had been required to accept a CSE assignment. Although most CSE participants viewed their CSE experience positively, only slightly more than half saw their CSE job as a way out of welfare. CSE was credited with helping participants gain/improve the following types of employment qualifications: skills required for specific jobs; basic job skills; ability to use tools and machines; academic skills; soft skills; and good work habits. Supervisors generally considered CSE useful, but stated that they could have given participants more training had the CSE positions been full time. (Contains 10 tables and 7 figures.) (MN)

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An Analysis of Vermont's Community Service Employment Program

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An Analysis of Vermont's Community Service Employment Program

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Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation

June 2002

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At MDRC, Barbara Goldman and David Butler have guided the WRP evaluation since its inception. Johanna Walter managed the CSE survey data and coordinated the efforts of MDRC and PATH. Jordan Kolovson acted as MDRC's liaison to ORC/Macro, International, the survey subcontractor, and prepared the survey data for analysis. Richard Hendra provided technical assistance and analytical support. Robert Weber edited the report, and Stephanie Cowell prepared it for publication.

The Authors

Introduction

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP) was one of the earliest statewide welfare reforms initiated under waivers of federal welfare rules granted before the passage of the 1996 federal welfare law. WRP, which was implemented statewide in 1994 and ended mid-2001, required single-parent welfare recipients to work in a wage-paying job after 30 months of cash assistance receipt. (The work requirement took effect after 15 months for two-parent families with an able-bodied primary wage-earner.) Parents who could not find an unsubsidized job were given a subsidized, minimum-wage community service employment (CSE) position in order to satisfy the work requirement.

This report was prepared as part of a comprehensive evaluation of WRP conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) under contract with the Vermont Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition, and Health Access (PATH). The report focuses on the CSE component, drawing on data from administrative records and from surveys of CSE participants and their supervisors that were conducted in 2000.

Even though WRP has ended and CSE is no longer used in Vermont, the information presented here remains relevant because Vermont's new welfare system is even more strongly work-focused.[1] The data also should be useful more generally to researchers and practitioners who are interested in temporary subsidized employment as a strategy to support welfare recipients' self-sufficiency and transition into unsubsidized jobs.

After a brief summary of the findings, this report describes WRP and the role of CSE and lays out the data sources used in the report. It then discusses the purposes of CSE, describes the characteristics of CSE participants, and provides data on how long people held CSE positions. The remaining sections describe the results of the CSE participant and supervisor surveys, focusing on placement in CSE positions, participants' experiences in CSE, and their exit from CSE.

The Findings in Brief

Although WRP planners originally estimated that large numbers of welfare recipients would need CSE slots in order to meet the work requirement, in fact CSE was rarely used. Of more than 3,000 single parents analyzed as part of the WRP evaluation, only about 2 percent ever worked in a CSE position within roughly four years after enrollment. Most of the recipients who became subject to the work requirement were able to obtain unsubsidized jobs in the strong labor market of the late 1990s.

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[1]Vermont's new welfare law, which took effect in July 2001, generally requires parents to participate in work activities either as soon as they are deemed work-ready or after 12 months on welfare, whichever happens first.

CSE was designed to serve a dual purpose: (1) to give parents meaningful work in order to meet the WRP work requirement and (2) to improve participants' ability to obtain unsubsidized jobs. MDRC's survey found that parents who were placed in CSE slots generally had positive views about their experiences. Most thought that it was fair that they were required to work in a CSE assignment, and large majorities reported that they did meaningful work and increased their skills. Nearly 60 percent of respondents reported that they had worked in an unsubsidized job at some point since starting the CSE assignment.

Most CSE supervisors also reported positive experiences with the program and felt that CSE employees were generally comparable to non-CSE employees doing similar work. Supervisors reported that they went beyond basic supervision to help participants address barriers to stable attendance.

The Welfare Restructuring Project and the Role of Community Service Employment

WRP included two main components: (1) financial work incentives designed to promote and reward employment and (2) a work requirement.[2] Under the program's rules, single parents receiving Aid to Needy Families with Children (ANFC) were required to work in a wage-paying job after 30 months of benefit receipt.[3] Single parents were generally required to work part time if they had a child under 13 years old and full time if they had no child under 13. (A full-time work requirement was imposed after 15 months for two-parent families with an able-bodied primary wage-earner.)[4]

Under WRP, single-parent recipients were encouraged, but not required, to participate in employment preparation activities through the state's Reach Up welfare-to-work program until they had received benefits for 28 months. At that point, they were required to engage in a two-month job search program administered by the Department of Employment and Training (DET). If the parent did not obtain a job by the end of month 30, DET was responsible for developing a CSE slot for him or her in a public or nonprofit organization. If a single-parent recipient refused to accept the CSE assignment (or quit or was fired), cash assistance was provided in the form of vendor payments for housing, food, and utilities. Benefits were not reduced.

The CSE program was designed both to provide meaningful work that would allow participants to meet their work requirement and to help participants develop or enhance their work habits to prepare for unsubsidized employment. Thus, the design of the CSE program was

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[2]The financial work incentives included, for example, an "earnings disregard" whereby the first $150 plus 25 percent of any remaining earnings were not counted in determining a family's monthly ANFC grant.

[3]ANFC was Vermont's cash assistance program, funded in part by the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. As of July 1, 2001, the new name for Vermont's TANF-funded financial assistance and employment services is Reach Up.

[4]Two-parent families with an incapacitated parent were subject to the same rules as single parents.

hybrid, combining elements of earlier subsidized employment models. On the one hand, CSE positions were designed to look like "real" jobs. Unlike participants in traditional "workfare" programs, CSE workers received a paycheck reflecting the hours they worked, and CSE earnings qualified for the federal and state Earned Income Credits (EICs).[5] On the other hand, CSE positions were meant to be temporary and were designed to be less attractive than unsubsidized employment. Thus, CSE positions paid minimum wage; any one position could last only 10 months (after which the participant returned to the 2-month job search); and several features of the welfare rules were designed to favor unsubsidized employment over CSE.[6]

Data Sources and Analysis

As noted earlier, this study of community service employment is part of a larger MDRC evaluation of the Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP). To facilitate the evaluation, between July 1994 and December 1996, more than 17,000 parents who were applying for or receiving ANFC were assigned, at random, to one of three groups:

- The WRP group, which was subject to the program's work requirements and eligible for its enhanced incentives;
- The WRP Incentives Only group, which received the incentives but was not subject to the work requirements; or
- The ANFC group, which neither received the incentives nor was subject to the work requirement.[7]

MDRC tracked all three groups over time to determine the effects of the full WRP program, the effects of the incentives alone, and the effects of adding the work requirement to the incentives. The most recent published reports tracked the three groups for three and a half years after each person entered the study.[8] The evaluation used data from the entire state but focused in detail on six of Vermont's twelve welfare districts (Barre, Burlington, Newport, Rutland,

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[5]Through a process called grant diversion, ANFC grants were converted into CSE wages, which were paid through a payroll-processing company working under contract to the state. The state paid for worker's compensation, liability insurance, and the employer's portion of FICA, and participants in CSE also earned an additional $90 a month as a standard expense allowance to replace the deducted FICA and to reimburse traveling expenses to the worksite.

[6]For example, a parent could satisfy the work requirement by working in unsubsidized employment for 75 percent of the total hours required. Also, while recipients in unsubsidized employment received the standard earnings disregard described above ($150 plus 25 percent of any remaining earnings), those in CSE were allowed only a $90 work expense deduction.

[7]Sixty percent of parents were assigned to the WRP group; 20 percent were assigned to the WRP Incentives Only group; and 20 percent were assigned to the ANFC group.

[8]Hendra and Michalopoulos, 1999; Bloom, Hendra, and Michalopoulos, 2000. The evaluation's final report will present six years of follow-up data.

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Springfield, St. Albans). In addition, most of the analysis focused on parents who entered the study during its first year, between July 1994 and June 1995.[9]

The analysis presented in this report uses three main data sources. First, administrative records provided by the State of Vermont were used to determine whether each member of the WRP group worked in a CSE slot in each month of the follow-up period and whether these parents worked in a job covered by the Vermont or New Hampshire unemployment insurance (UI) programs.[10] These data were used to determine the percentage of parents who were ever in CSE, the number of months they remained in CSE, and their rates of unsubsidized employment.

Second, baseline demographic data that were collected when each parent entered the study were used to compare the characteristics of WRP group members who were in a CSE position with the characteristics of parents who were never in CSE.

Finally, the bulk of the report summarizes the results of two surveys that were conducted in 2000 by a subcontractor to MDRC. The first, the CSE participant survey, targeted each parent in the state who was assigned to a CSE position at any time during 1999. MDRC identified the sample for the participant survey by reviewing monthly management reports compiled by PATH (which was then the Department of Social Welfare [DSW]). A total of 101 parents were identified from the management reports as having been assigned to a CSE position during 1999, and 83 of them (82 percent) were located and interviewed. (Of these 83 respondents, 81 reported that they had actually worked in a CSE position.) The 35-minute survey, administered by phone in most cases, focused on the participants' experiences in their first CSE position (28 percent of respondents reported having been in more than one CSE position).

The second survey targeted the primary CSE worksite supervisor of each of the parents in the participant survey. A total of 79 supervisor surveys were completed. In some instances, identical questions were asked of both the participants and the supervisors, so it is possible to compare each group's perceptions of certain issues. However, because a number of the supervisors who were interviewed were not linked to any of the participants who were interviewed (and vice versa), the participant and supervisor surveys were analyzed separately, rather than as matched pairs.

Characteristics of CSE Participants and the Length of Time in CSE Positions

Table 1 presents selected demographic characteristics of the single parents who were randomly assigned to the WRP group between July 1994 and June 1995 in the six districts that were targeted for intensive study. The first column includes sample members who ever worked

[9]A total of 7,691 families (5,469 single-parent families and 2,222 two-parent families) entered the study between July 1994 and June 1995 in the six districts targeted for intensive study.

[10]The UI data cover calendar quarters (for example, January to March, April to June, and so on).

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project

Table 1

Selected Characteristics at the Time of Random Assignment of Single-Parent WRP Sample Members With and Without a CSE Position

Characteristic	Ever in CSE	Never in CSE
Demographic characteristics		
District office (%)		
Barre	14.3	14.7
Burlington	15.6	34.0
Newport	32.5	8.4
Rutland	14.3	19.2
Springfield	9.1	10.7
St. Albans	14.3	13.0
Age (%)		
Under 20	5.2	5.7
20-24	15.6	22.1
25-34	48.1	43.5
35-44	29.9	23.6
45 or over	1.3	5.0
Average age (years)	32	31
Family status		
Marital status (%)		
Never married	33.8	33.3
Married, living apart	18.2	16.0
Separated	7.8	6.7
Divorced	40.3	36.2
Other	0.0	7.8
Average number of children	2	2
Age of youngest child (%)		
Under 3[a]	39.0	37.3
3-5	16.9	22.4
6-12	40.3	29.6
13-18	3.9	10.7
Labor force status		
Ever worked full time for 6 months or more for one employer[b] (%)	55.8	61.7
Approximate earnings in the past 12 months (%)		
None	72.7	52.4
$1-$999	14.3	13.9
$1,000-$4,999	6.5	18.7
$5,000-$9,999	3.9	9.3
$10,000 or more	2.6	5.3
Currently employed[c] (%)	7.8	23.1

(continued)

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Table 1 (continued)

Characteristic	Ever in CSE	Never in CSE
Educational status		
Highest grade completed in school (average)	11	11
Highest degree/diploma earned (%)		
GED[d]	14.3	18.1
High school diploma	54.5	42.8
Technical/2-year college degree	2.6	8.5
4-year (or more) college degree	0.0	3.6
None of the above	28.6	27.2
Sample size	77	3,194

SOURCES: MDRC calculations using data from Background Information Forms and Vermont ANFC records.

NOTES: The sample includes members randomly assigned from July 1994 through June 1995 in the six research districts.

Invalid or missing values are not included in individual variable distributions.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

[a]Includes sample members pregnant with their first child.

[b]Full-time employment is defined as 30 hours or more per week.

[c]Includes sample members who reported self-employment.

[d]The General Educational Development (GED) certificate is given to those who pass the GED test and is intended to signify knowledge of basic high school subjects.

in a CSE position within 42 to 53 months after entering the study, and the second column includes those who never worked in a CSE position.[11] The demographic data were collected at the point when parents entered the study.

When WRP was designed, DSW planners assumed that large numbers of CSE slots would be needed. In 1994, for example, planners estimated that the number of active CSE slots would peak at more than 1,700. In fact, the number of parents in CSE positions statewide never exceeded 70 in any month. This pattern is borne out in Table 1, which shows that only 77 parents (2.4 percent of the single parents in the WRP group) ever worked in a CSE position. (In addition, 34 of the 992 ANFC-UP parents in the evaluation sample worked in a CSE position,

[11]The administrative data used for this analysis cover the period from July 1994 through December 1998. This allows for 42 months (three and a half years) of follow-up for parents randomly assigned in June 1995 and for 53 months of follow-up for those assigned at the beginning of the study, in July 1994. Sample members are considered to have been in CSE if, according to the administrative records, they ever received a payment that was flagged as a CSE wage. It is possible that some other sample members worked in a CSE position so briefly that they never received a paycheck.

as did 9 of the 345 two-parent cases with an incapacitated parent).[12] Other analysis conducted for the WRP evaluation suggests that there are three main reasons for the small number of CSE placements:

- Nearly 60 percent of the single parents did not accumulate 30 months of ANFC receipt, and thus they were never subject to the work requirement.
- A substantial proportion of those who reached the 30-month point were exempted from the work requirement for medical or other reasons.
- Among those who were not exempted, most were able to meet the work requirement via unsubsidized employment, which was strongly emphasized by staff.[13]

Interestingly, Table 1 shows that the demographic characteristics of the sample members who were in CSE are generally similar to the characteristics of those who were not in CSE. The most dramatic difference relates to the level of work experience in the period just before random assignment: 73 percent of the sample members who were in CSE did not work in the year prior to random assignment, compared with 52 percent of those who were not in CSE.

It is also notable that nearly one-third of those who worked in CSE were from the Newport district office, even though that office accounted for less than 10 percent of the sample in the research districts. This is consistent with statewide monthly reports from PATH, which showed that the Newport office usually had more recipients in CSE than any other office. Staff reported that there were relatively few unsubsidized jobs available in the Newport area.

MDRC also used the administrative records to examine how many total months sample members spent in a CSE position, finding that more than two-thirds of them were in CSE for 6 months or less; only 9 percent were in CSE for 11 months or more. (The limit on any one CSE placement was 10 months.)[14]

Finally, by linking the welfare data with UI records, it is possible to estimate how many of the parents who were placed in CSE transitioned to unsubsidized employment. In all, of the 77 single parents who worked in a CSE position, 39 (51 percent) worked in a UI-covered job

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[12]The figure of 77 single parents in CSE is not directly comparable to the 101 people who were identified for the CSE participant survey. The latter figure includes all parents (from both single-parent and two-parent families) who were ever assigned to CSE throughout the state during 1999. The former figure includes only single parents from the six research districts who actually worked in a CSE position and received a paycheck within the follow-up period covered by the administrative data.

[13]In addition, MDRC found that, because of a variety of administrative issues, some participants who had passed the 30-month point were neither exempt nor meeting the work requirement at any point in time. For example, some people had only recently returned to welfare or lost a job and were participating in the two-month job search (see Bloom, Michalopoulos, Walter, and Auspos, 1998).

[14]These figures are based on the 55 single-parent sample members who worked in CSE but were not in their position when the follow-up period ended.

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either in the quarter that they first worked in CSE or in a subsequent quarter. (Of the 38 who did not work in a UI-covered job, 18 were still in CSE during the last month covered by the data.)

Because some of the CSE participant survey respondents are not members of the WRP evaluation research sample — for example, they may have entered WRP after random assignment ended in December 1996 — MDRC does not have the type of data shown in Table 1 for all respondents. This makes it impossible to determine the extent to which the survey respondents are representative of all parents who have worked in CSE. As discussed below, however, survey responses suggest that a disproportionate percentage of the survey respondents may have worked in CSE for at least 10 months. This means that the experiences of the CSE participant survey respondents may not reflect the views of parents who worked only briefly in a CSE position.

Placement in CSE Positions

The CSE participant survey asked a number of questions about the process through which respondents ended up in a CSE position. Not surprisingly, more than 90 percent of respondents reported that they had looked for a non-CSE job before being assigned to CSE.

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project

Table 2

Participants' Perceptions of the CSE Assignment

Measure (%)	Percentage
Fairness of being required to accept a CSE assignment	
Very fair	43.8
Somewhat fair	45.0
Somewhat unfair	6.3
Very unfair	5.0
Participant was given a choice of assignment	58.0
Of those given a choice, got preferred assignment[a]	*95.7*
Sample size	81

SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

[a]Sample size = 47.

Table 2 shows that a majority of the survey respondents (58 percent) reported that they were given a choice about which CSE slot they would be assigned to and that nearly all of those who were given a choice got their preferred assignment. In interviews with staff con-

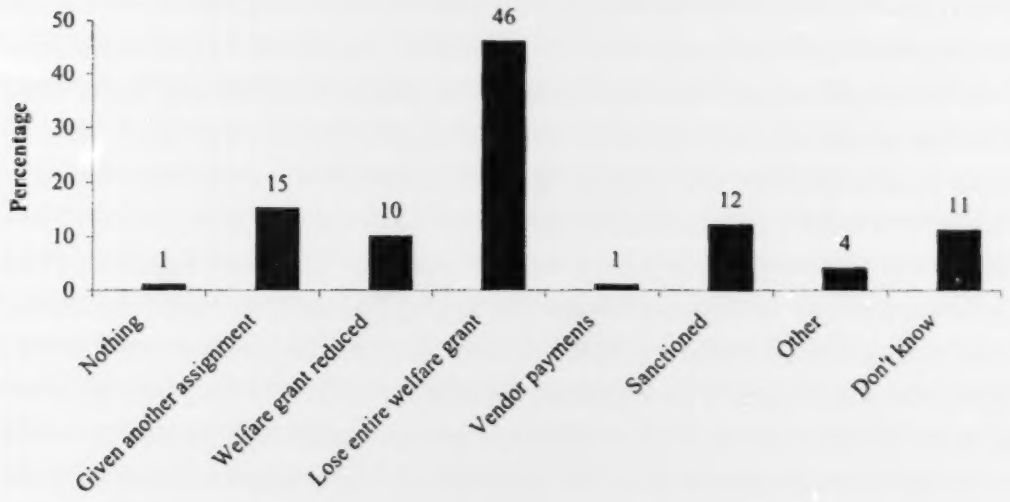
ducted as part of the WRP evaluation, MDRC found that DET and DSW workers often sought to match recipients' CSE placements with their skills and interests. However, this was not always possible, particularly if the participant lived in a very rural area that was not near many CSE worksites. Also, attempts to match participants with particular CSE placements can lengthen the assignment process, and the DSW central office strongly encouraged the local offices to place recipients in CSE as quickly as possible if they were unable to find unsubsidized employment by the end of month 30. Results from the supervisor survey indicate that most of the CSE worksites were involved with education, public works, or social services.

Although many participants were not given a choice about their CSE assignment, Table 2 shows that nearly 90 percent said that they believed it was very or somewhat fair that they had been required to accept a CSE assignment.

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project

Figure 1

Participants' Perceptions of Consequences If They Refused CSE Assignment



SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTE: Sample size = 81.

As stated earlier, if a parent refused to accept a CSE assignment (or quit or was fired), benefits were not reduced, but the assistance was provided in the form of vendor payments for housing, food, and utilities. However, as shown in Figure 1, over half of participants believed

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that they would lose their welfare grant or have it reduced if they refused a CSE assignment, and only 1 percent were under the impression that they would receive vendor payments (another 12 percent referred to a "sanction," by which they may have meant vendor payments).[15] Staff reported that many participants had similar misimpressions about the WRP 30-month work requirement (which was often referred to as a "time limit"), thinking that it triggered a loss of welfare benefits rather than a work requirement. Interestingly, of the respondents who thought that their welfare grant would be reduced or canceled if they refused to accept a CSE position, about three-fourths said that "someone at DSW" had told them this.

Experiences in CSE

Participants' general perceptions of CSE assignments are presented in Figure 2 and Table 3. The results are generally positive. Figure 2 shows that about two-thirds of participants strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that their CSE position seemed like a "real" job, despite the low pay and the fact that the state paid their wages. On the other hand, only a little over half agreed that they saw their CSE job as a way out of welfare.

Table 3 shows the responses to a variety of other questions about participants' experiences, and once again the results are quite positive. Most participants felt that their CSE work was necessary and that they had enough to do on the job. (Although not shown in the table, a majority of those who reported not having enough work to do said that they did not have enough work for only five or fewer hours a week.) Additionally, a large majority valued their CSE assignment as an investment for themselves: 82 percent strongly or somewhat agreed that their CSE position provided a good opportunity to get training or experience for future jobs. Finally, it appears that participants appreciated the work-for-wages aspect of the CSE design: 85 percent strongly agreed that they preferred to get a paycheck rather than only a welfare check.

Given participants' generally high levels of satisfaction with their CSE assignments, it is not surprising that most respondents reported that they looked forward to going to work while in CSE (Figure 3) and that most of the work that they did was interesting to them (Figure 4).

Figure 5 presents what participants liked best and least about their CSE assignment. Forty-six percent reported that they most liked their hours and schedules. Interestingly, the percentage who gave this response was about the same for both full-time and part-time participants (not shown in the figure). Other things that participants liked best about their CSE assignment were having goals, being appreciated for the work done, and feeling useful.

Table 4 examines the supervisors' perspectives. A large majority of supervisors (84 percent) reported that the company needed the work that was performed by the CSE participant, although only 13 percent reported that the work would not get done without the CSE participant.

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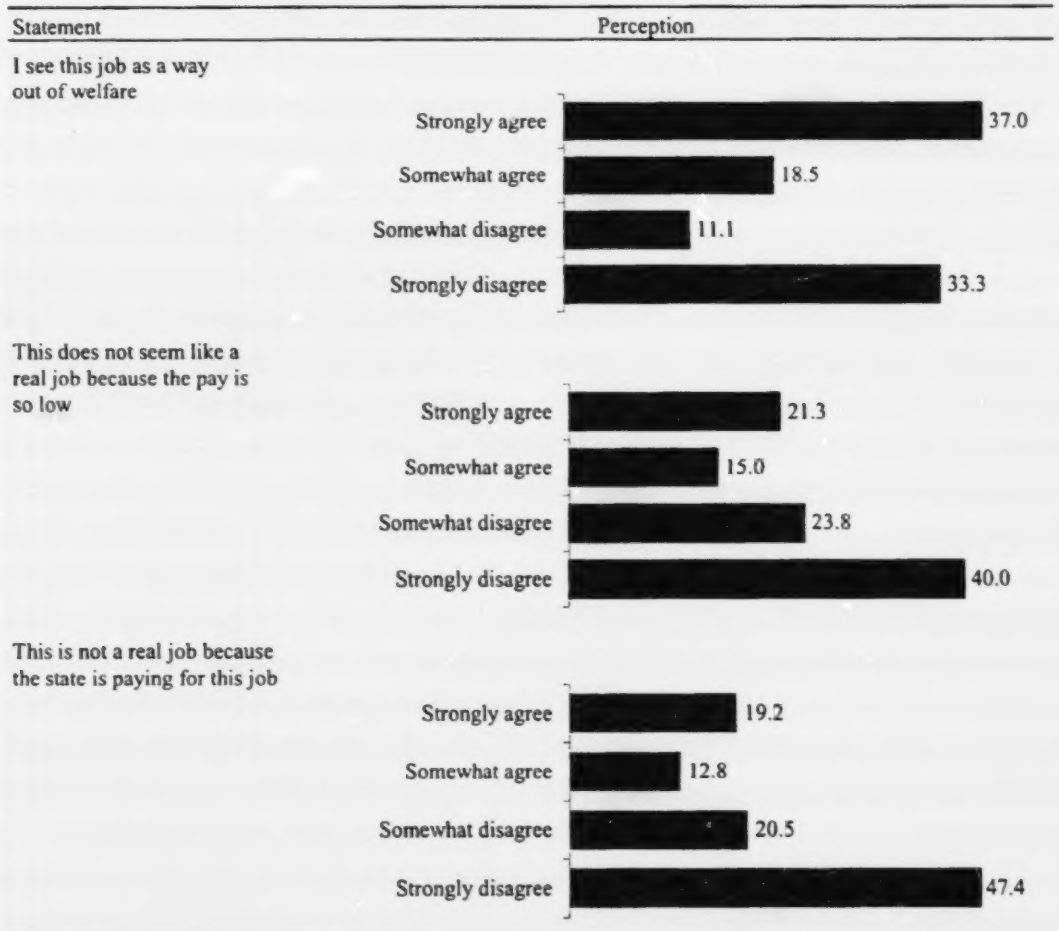
[15]It is possible that some respondents perceived that their welfare grant would be "lost" if all or most of it was converted to vendor payments.

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project

Figure 2

Participants' Perceptions of CSE Assignments



SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

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Table 3

Participants' Perceptions of Their CSE Experience

Measure	Percentage
I always had enough to do at assignment	
Yes	60.5
No	39.5
Perception of assignment position	
The work I do is necessary for company	80.2
The work I do is needed but can wait	9.9
The work I do is helpful, but not required	9.9
Level of satisfaction with CSE job	
Very satisfied	58.0
Somewhat satisfied	32.1
Not satisfied	9.9
The CSE is an opportunity to get training or experience for future job	
Somewhat or strongly agree	82.3
Somewhat or strongly disagree	17.8
My CSE position is just something to do to receive benefits	
Somewhat or strongly agree	47.6
Somewhat or strongly disagree	52.5
My supervisor is concerned about me	
Somewhat or strongly agree	73.4
Somewhat or strongly disagree	26.6
People look down on me in this job	
Somewhat or strongly agree	20.9
Somewhat or strongly disagree	79.0
I prefer a paycheck for work rather than only a welfare check	
Somewhat or strongly agree	92.6
Somewhat or strongly disagree	7.4
Caring for my children is harder because of my CSE job	
Somewhat or strongly agree	22.2
Somewhat or strongly disagree	77.8
Relationship with my children has improved with a job	
Somewhat or strongly agree	57.5
Somewhat or strongly disagree	42.6
Sample size	81

SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

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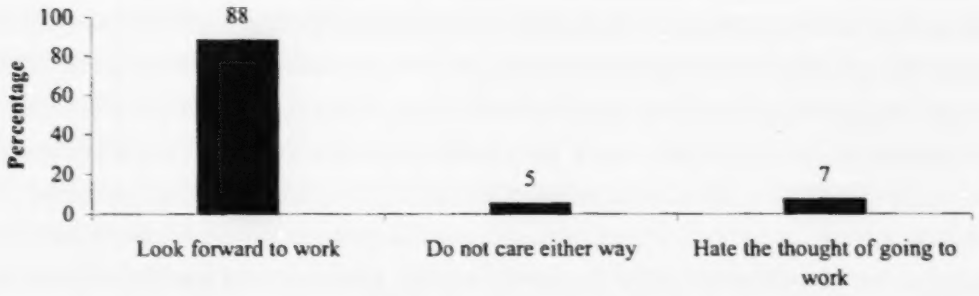
Figure 3

Participants' Attitudes About Going to CSE Job



SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTES: Sample size = 81.

Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

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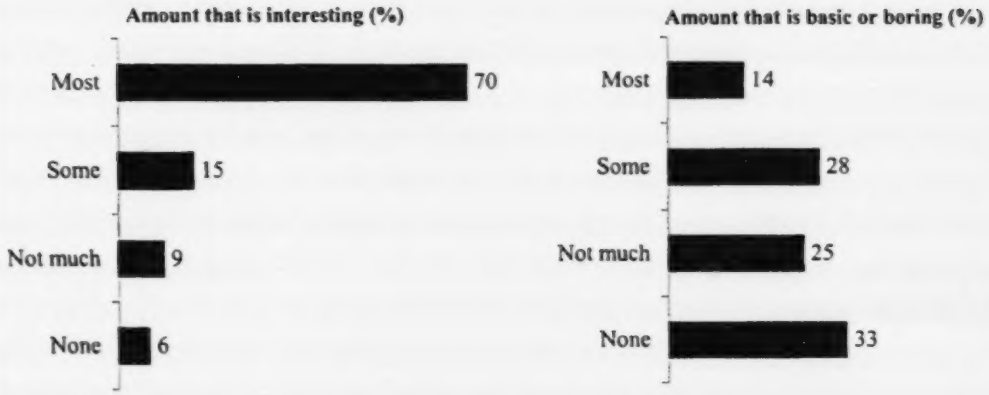
Figure 4

Participants' Perceptions About CSE Work



SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTES: Sample size = 81.

Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

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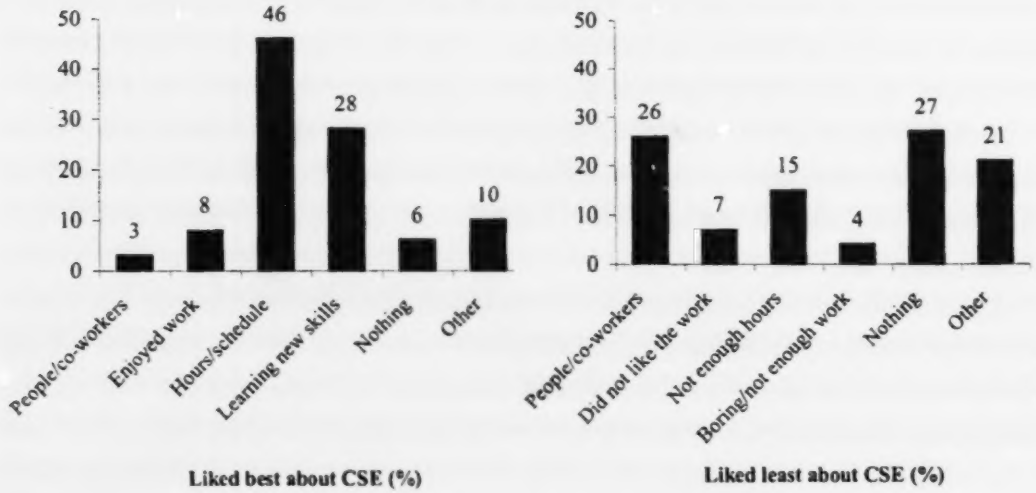
Figure 5

What Participants Liked Best and Least About CSE Assignment



SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTES: Sample size = 81.

Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

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Table 4

Supervisors' Perceptions of the CSE Assignment

Measure	Percentage
Importance of the work performed by CSE participant	
Work is necessary for company	83.5
Work is needed but can wait	13.9
Work is helpful but not required	2.5
What would happen to work without CSE participant	
Would hire someone else to do the work	19.5
Would give work to other staff	67.5
Work would not get done	13.0
Change in participant's responsibility since assigned	
Much more responsibility	26.6
Somewhat more responsibility	38.0
About the same responsibility	31.6
Somewhat less responsibility	2.5
Much less responsibility	1.3
Part-time hours allow for productive assignment[a]	81.0
If the participant had worked full time, she:[a]	
Would get more training	56.7
Would get same training	41.7
Would get less training	1.7
Would learn many more skills	41.0
Would learn a few more skills	42.6
Would learn no more skills	16.4
Would have gotten different work	35.0
Among those who would have gotten a different assignment, then participant would get more responsibility[b]	*81.0*
Sample size	79

SOURCE: Community Service Employment supervisor survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

[a]Only asked among those who worked less than 30 hours a week. Sample size = 63.

[b]Sample size = 21.

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More than 80 percent of the supervisors agreed that a part-time position offered enough time to be a productive assignment. However, if a CSE assignment had been a full-time position, more than half the supervisors (57 percent) reported that they would have been able to offer more training, and 41 percent said that participants would have learned many more skills. Nevertheless, about two-thirds of supervisors reported that the participant was given more responsibility during his or her time in the CSE position.

Tables 5 and 6 examine the specific skills that participants learned and used in their CSE assignments. Table 5 shows the distribution of "hard" skills that were either improved or newly learned in the position, as reported by participants. Roughly equal percentages of respondents reported learning computer, clerical, and basic job skills at their CSE assignment. Some of the other responses included learning how to communicate with children, working with the public, and financial management. Nearly 20 percent of CSE participants reported that they had learned no skills.

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Table 5

Skills Learned and Improved at CSE Position, as Reported by Participants

Skills	Percentage
Clerical/office work	17.3
Cleaning	6.2
Computer	19.8
Basic job	16.0
None	19.8
Other	21.0
Sample size	81

SOURCE: Community Service Employment supervisor survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

Table 6 examines a number of other hard and "soft" skills, based on responses to a series of questions that were asked in nearly identical form to both participants (shown in the left-hand panel) and supervisors (the right-hand panel). There was remarkably close agreement between the two groups (especially because the samples do not overlap perfectly) regarding which skills were important to the jobs. Both sets of respondents agreed that soft skills such as communication and cooperation with co-workers were important in nearly all the CSE assignments. The use of basic machines (such as copiers), reading and writing skills, and dealing with the

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Table 6

Skills Important for CSE Position and Improved During Assignment, as Reported by Participants and Supervisors

	Participants (%)		Supervisors (%)	
Skills	Important for Position	Improved During Assignment[a]	Important for Position	Improved During Assignment[a]
Use of tools/machines				
Use of basic manual tools[b]	51.9	30.9	52.6	41.0
Use of basic machines[c]	82.7	71.6	87.3	75.9
Use of complex machines[d]	61.7	58.0	53.2	48.1
Academic skills				
Reading or writing	81.5	45.7	81.0	65.8
Arithmetic	49.4	32.0	42.3	30.8
Soft skills				
Communication	90.1	81.5	94.9	79.7
Cooperation with co-workers	96.3	90.1	96.2	n/a
Dealing with the public	86.4	81.5	76.9	69.2
Creative problem solving	67.5	61.3	57.0	50.6
Sample size	81	81	79	79
	Adequate at Start of Assignment	Improved During Assignment	Adequate at Start of Assignment	Improved During Assignment
Additional soft skills				
Attendance and punctuality	95.1	63.8	69.2	43.6
Ability to concentrate on tasks	93.8	82.3	73.1	67.9
Ability to provide notification when late or absent	93.8	67.9	67.5	53.2
Sample size	81	81	79	79

SOURCE: Community Service Employment supervisor survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

N/A = not available.

[a]These figures are a conservative estimate because improvement questions were only asked of respondents who reported that the particular skill was important to their CSE job.

[b]Brooms, shovels, brushes, serving utensils, etc.

[c]Telephone, copy machine, vacuum cleaner, etc.

[d]Computer, car, power tools, etc.

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public were also important in most of the jobs. There was also general agreement that substantial proportions of participants improved these skills during their CSE assignments.

The bottom panel of Table 6 examines some other soft skills, using a slightly different format. Regarding all three soft skills shown, nearly all participants reported that their skills were adequate at the start of the assignment, and moderately high percentages reported that their skills had improved during the assignment. The supervisors' perceptions were somewhat different: Lower percentages reported that the participants' skills were adequate at the start of the assignment or that they had improved during the assignment.

Of those who responded to the supervisor survey, 89 percent had supervised non-CSE employees performing tasks similar to those performed by the CSE participants. Table 7 presents these supervisors' perceptions of CSE employees compared with non-CSE employees in similar positions. In general, supervisors considered CSE participants to be comparable to other employees. For example, 65 percent of supervisors reported that CSE participants did the same amount of work as non-CSE workers. Consistent with the earlier discussion, the supervisors expressed some concern about participants' attendance and punctuality: 35 percent reported that CSE participants were worse than other employees in this respect.

At the same time, as might be expected, a substantial proportion of supervisors felt that CSE participants took up more of their time than did other employees. About half said that CSE workers generated more paperwork. (The worksite supervisor was responsible for submitting a time report, conducting a performance review every two weeks, and having at least monthly contact with the participant's Reach Up worker regarding performance.) Just over one-third of supervisors reported that they spent more time with CSE employees than with non-CSE employees doing similar work.

Nearly 70 percent of supervisors reported that a non-CSE employee doing the same tasks would be paid $6.25 or more, which is above the minimum wage paid to CSE workers. This suggests that CSE participants had a financial incentive to seek unsubsidized employment. Table 8 offers some insights into why many supervisors felt that they had to spend more time with CSE employees. The top panel lists a number of issues that, in the view of supervisors, affected participants' attendance; family problems were identified most frequently. The bottom panel shows that more than 40 percent of supervisors reported that such problems affected CSE participants "often" or "all the time" and that more than 80 percent of supervisors helped participants deal with these problems. As noted earlier (Table 3), a large majority of participants (73 percent) agreed that their CSE supervisor was concerned about them.

Finally, Table 9 examines a number of issues related to the supervisors' contacts with the Department of Employment and Training (DET). A large majority of supervisors (84 percent) reported that they were given a description of the purpose of CSE assignments by DET, and most reported that they were under the impression that the purpose was to improve the participant's employability. Nearly two-thirds of supervisors reported that they had at least monthly contact with DET while supervising the CSE participant.

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Table 7

Supervisors' Experiences with CSE Employees Compared with Non-CSE Employees

Measure	Percentage
Paperwork required for CSE employee	
More paperwork	51.4
Same amount of paperwork	34.3
Less paperwork	14.3
Hourly starting pay rate for non-CSE employee to perform the same work[a]	
$6 or less	31.1
$6.25-$7.00	36.0
$7.25-$8.00	21.2
$8.25-$9.00	8.2
$9.50 or more	3.2
Work done by CSE participant	
More	15.6
Same	64.9
Less	19.5
Time spent with CSE employee	
Much more or somewhat more	37.3
About the same	53.3
Much less or somewhat less	9.4
Attendance standards for CSE employee	
Much more or somewhat more strict	3.8
About the same	81.0
Somewhat less strict	15.2
Attendance and punctuality of CSE employee	
Much better or somewhat better	21.8
About the same	43.6
Much worse or somewhat worse	34.6
Dealing with attendance or punctuality problems of CSE employee[b]	
Much easier or somewhat easier	13.3
About the same	58.3
Much harder or somewhat harder	28.3
Sample size	79

SOURCE: Community Service Employment supervisor survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

[a]Seventeen supervisors reported not knowing the pay rate for the non-CSE employee; therefore, the sample size = 62.

[b]Only asked of supervisors who felt that the CSE participant's attendence and punctuality were the same as or worse than the non-CSE worker's. Sample size = 60.

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Table 8

Supervisors' Dealing with CSE Employees' Attendance

Measure	Percentage
Issues affecting attendance[a]	
Transportation difficulties	15.7
Poor health, family health problems	17.1
Child care problems	25.7
Family/marital problems	50.0
No problems	14.3
Lack of education	2.9
Other	14.3
Frequency with which these issues affect employees[b]	
Rarely	28.3
Sometimes	28.3
Often	28.3
All the time	15.0
Supervisor helped deal with these problems[b]	81.0
Sample size	70

SOURCE: Community Service Employment supervisor survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

[a]Supervisors were able to give multiple responses; therefore, the percentages do not sum to 100.

[b]Sample is of those who reported their participant as having attendance issues. Sample size = 60.

In brief, supervisors viewed the CSE experience as a positive program not only for their organization but for participants as well. Seventy percent of supervisors believed that the CSE experience improved the participant's ability to deal with problems in the future. Nearly 80 percent reported that they would give the CSE participant a positive recommendation if she or he were seeking a similar job with another employer.

Leaving CSE and Post-CSE Experiences

Figures 6 and 7 show participants' and supervisors' perceptions about why the participant left the CSE assignment. (These questions were asked of participants who were no longer in CSE when interviewed; 28 percent were still in CSE.)

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Table 9

Supervisors' Understanding of CSE Objectives and Their Contact with DET

Measure	Percentage
Number of CSE participants rejected because of lack of experience or work habits	
0	67.1
1-2	25.0
3-5	5.2
>5	2.6
Was told the purpose of CSE by DET	83.5
What was told about the purpose of CSE by DET[a]	
Develop occupational skills	36.4
Improve participant's employability	59.1
Get participant to work for benefits	4.5
To what extent this purpose has been met[a]	
Has been met	59.7
Met somewhat	38.7
Not met well	1.6
DET offered suggestions to set up useful CSE assignments	55.8
Frequency of contact with DET	
At least weekly	17.6
Less than weekly, at least every 2 weeks	14.9
Less than every 2 weeks, at least monthly	31.1
Less than monthly, at least quarterly	6.8
Quarterly	12.2
Less than quarterly	6.8
Never	6.8
Other	4.1
Reasons tried to contact DET[b]	
Information on participant's schedule	21.8
Unsatisfactory job performance	17.9
Unsatisfactory attendance	25.6
Participant's personal problems	21.8
Ask for more workers	37.2
Mention good job performance	16.7
Never called them	17.9
Questions about payroll	2.6
General information about program	2.6
Other	3.8
Sample size	79

SOURCE: Community Service Employment supervisor survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

[a]Only asked of supervisors who reported that they were told the purpose of CSE by DET. Sample size = 66.

[b]Supervisors were able to give multiple responses; therefore, percentages total over 100.

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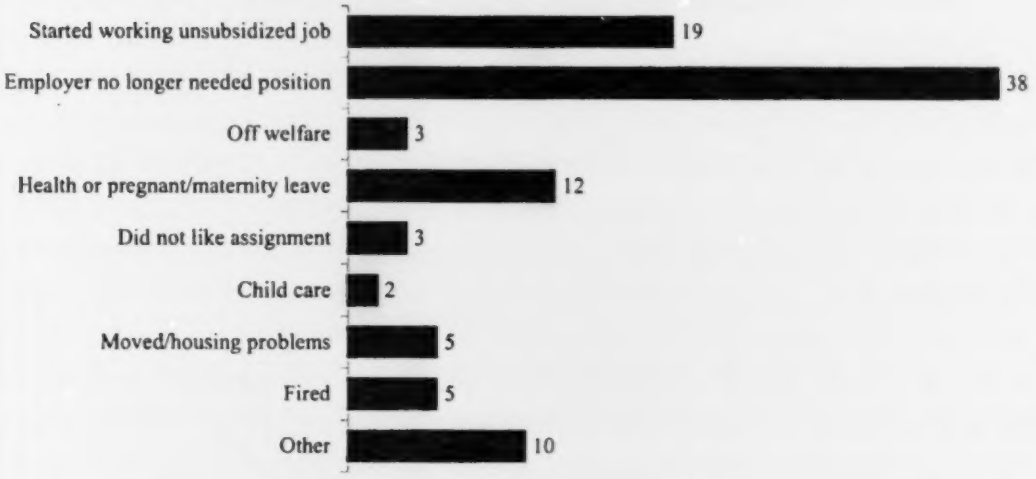
Figure 6

Participants' Reasons for Why They Left Their CSE Assignment



SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTES: Sample size = 58 (those who were not currently in CSE at the time of the survey).

Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

Interestingly, 32 percent of supervisors reported that the participant had "finished the maximum amount of time allowed on the job." (Similarly, 38 percent of participants reported that they had left because the employer no longer needed them — which may mean the same thing.) It is unclear whether supervisors were referring to the 10-month limit on a single CSE placement or to shorter limits established by the particular worksites. If the former, this is a surprising result, because the administrative data discussed earlier show that few participants remained in CSE for as long as 10 months. It may be that individuals who were in CSE during 1999, when the survey sample was drawn, were more likely to be long-term recipients who remained in CSE for extended periods. Because of the way families entered WRP, the number reaching the 30-month work requirement peaked in 1997 and early 1998; relatively few families reached the work requirement in each month thereafter. As the number of new participants dwindled, the remaining CSE caseload may have become increasingly dominated by long-term participants.

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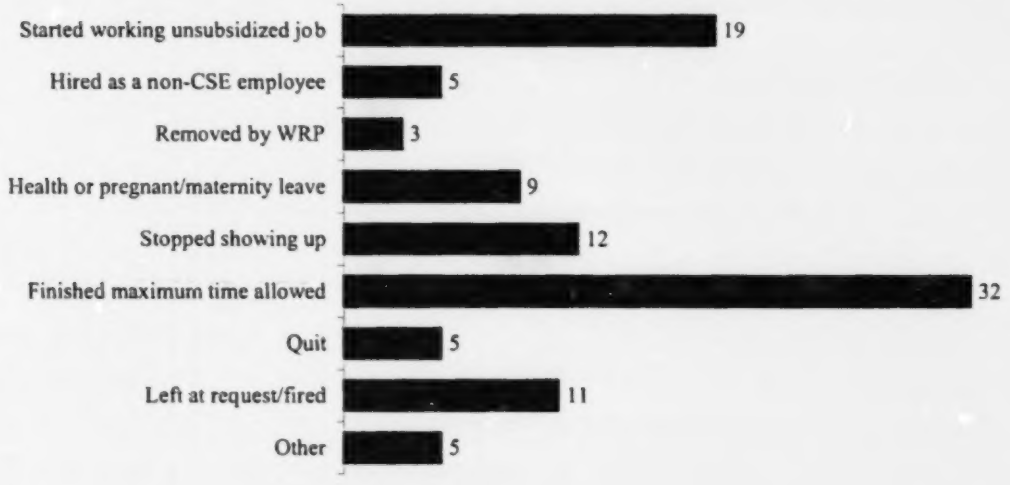
Figure 7

Supervisors' Beliefs About Why Participants Left Their CSE Assignment



SOURCE: Community Service Employment supervisor survey.

NOTES: Sample size = 65 (supervisors reporting on participants who were not still in CSE).

Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

In any case, it is important to note that the CSE participants' self-reports closely match the administrative data in another respect: 59 percent of respondents reported that they had worked in an unsubsidized job at some point since starting their CSE assignment. (As noted earlier, the administrative data show that 51 percent of sample members who worked in a CSE position had worked in a UI-covered job after starting the CSE assignment.) Among the "other" responses that participants gave for leaving CSE are that they got married, moved out of their district, or just did not like their assignment.

Table 10 presents participants' perceptions of how their CSE experiences led them to unsubsidized employment. Fifteen percent of the participants reported that their worksite provider hired them as a non-CSE employee (which was not a condition or expectation of the worksite provider). A large majority (82 percent) of participants who reported learning skills at their assignment agreed that the CSE position had made them better qualified for a non-CSE job. And of those who had worked in an unsubsidized job since CSE assignment, almost half believed that CSE had helped them get their job and improved their ability to work.

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Table 10

Movement from CSE to Unsubsidized Jobs, as Reported by Participants

Measure	Percentage
CSE job became a non-CSE job	14.8
CSE experience made participant better qualified for non-CSE job[a]	81.5
CSE experience helped participant get non-CSE job[b]	44.7
CSE experience improved participant's ability to work at non-CSE job[b]	44.7
Sample size	81

SOURCE: Community Service Employment participant survey.

NOTES: Respondents who refused to answer, had missing values, or responded with "don't know" were not included in the sample.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums or differences.

[a]Of those who reported that they learned skills in their CSE position. Sample size = 65.

[b]Of those who started working for pay at a non-CSE job since their CSE assignment. Sample size = 47.

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Bloom, Dan, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter, and Patricia Auspos. 1998. *WRP: Implementation and Early Impacts of Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project.* New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

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Recent Publications on MDRC Projects

Note: For works not published by MDRC, the publisher's name is shown in parentheses. With a few exceptions, this list includes reports published by MDRC since 1999. A complete publications list is available from MDRC and on its Web site (www.mdrc.org), from which copies of MDRC's publications can also be downloaded.

Reforming Welfare and Making Work Pay

Next Generation Project

A collaboration among researchers at MDRC and several other leading research institutions focused on studying the effects of welfare, antipoverty, and employment policies on children and families.

How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Children: A Synthesis of Research. 2001. Pamela Morris, Aletha Huston, Greg Duncan, Danielle Crosby, Johannes Bos.

How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Employment and Income: A Synthesis of Research. 2001. Dan Bloom, Charles Michalopoulós.

How Welfare and Work Policies for Parents Affect Adolescents: A Synthesis of Research. 2002. Lisa A. Gennetian, Greg J. Duncan, Virginia W. Knox, Wanda G. Vargas, Elizabeth Clark-Kauffman, Andrew S. London.

ReWORKing Welfare: Technical Assistance for States and Localities

A multifaceted effort to assist states and localities in designing and implementing their welfare reform programs. The project includes a series of "how-to" guides, conferences, briefings, and customized, in-depth technical assistance.

After AFDC: Welfare-to-Work Choices and Challenges for States. 1997. Dan Bloom.

Work First: How to Implement an Employment-Focused Approach to Welfare Reform. 1997. Amy Brown.

Business Partnerships: How to Involve Employers in Welfare Reform. 1998. Amy Brown, Maria Buck, Erik Skinner.

Promoting Participation: How to Increase Involvement in Welfare-to-Work Activities. 1999. Gayle Hamilton, Susan Scrivener.

Encouraging Work, Reducing Poverty: The Impact of Work Incentive Programs. 2000. Gordon Berlin.

Steady Work and Better Jobs: How to Help Low-Income Parents Sustain Employment and Advance in the Workforce. 2000. Julie Strawn, Karin Martinson.

Beyond Work First: How to Help Hard-to-Employ Individuals Get Jobs and Succeed in the Workforce. 2001. Amy Brown.

Project on Devolution and Urban Change

A multi-year study in four major urban counties — Cuyahoga County, Ohio (which includes the city of Cleveland), Los Angeles, Miami-Dade, and Philadelphia — that examines how welfare reforms are being implemented and affect poor people, their neighborhoods, and the institutions that serve them.

Big Cities and Welfare Reform: Early Implementation and Ethnographic Findings from the Project on Devolution and Urban Change. 1999. Janet Quint, Kathryn Edin, Maria Buck, Barbara Fink, Yolanda Padilla, Olis Simmons-Hewitt, Mary Valmont.

Food Security and Hunger in Poor, Mother-Headed Families in Four U.S. Cities. 2000. Denise Polit, Andrew London, John Martinez.

Assessing the Impact of Welfare Reform on Urban Communities: The Urban Change Project and Methodological Considerations. 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, Johannes Bos, Robert Lalonde, Nandita Verma.

Post-TANF Food Stamp and Medicaid Benefits: Factors That Aid or Impede Their Receipt. 2001. Janet Quint, Rebecca Widom.

Social Service Organizations and Welfare Reform. 2001. Barbara Fink, Rebecca Widom.

Monitoring Outcomes for Cuyahoga County's Welfare Leavers: How Are They Faring? 2001. Nandita Verma, Claudia Coulton.

The Health of Poor Urban Women: Findings from the Project on Devolution and Urban Change. 2001. Denise Polit, Andrew London, John Martinez.

Is Work Enough? The Experiences of Current and Former Welfare Mothers Who Work. 2001. Denise Polit, Rebecca Widom, Kathryn Edin, Stan Bowie, Andrew London, Ellen Scott, Abel Valenzuela.

Readying Welfare Recipients for Work: Lessons from Four Big Cities as They Implement Welfare Reform. 2002. Thomas Brock, Laura Nelson, Megan Reiter.

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Wisconsin Works

This study examines how Wisconsin's welfare-to-work program, one of the first to end welfare as an entitlement, is administered in Milwaukee.

Complaint Resolution in the Context of Welfare Reform: How W-2 Settles Disputes. 2001. Suzanne Lynn.

Exceptions to the Rule: The Implementation of 24-Month Time-Limit Extensions in W-2. 2001. Susan Gooden, Fred Doolittle.

Matching Applicants with Services: Initial Assessments in the Milwaukee County W-2 Program. 2001. Susan Gooden, Fred Doolittle, Ben Glispie.

Time Limits

Florida's Family Transition Program

An evaluation of Florida's initial time-limited welfare program, which includes services, requirements, and financial work incentives intended to reduce long-term welfare receipt and help welfare recipients find and keep jobs.

The Family Transition Program: Implementation and Three-Year Impacts of Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program. 1999. Dan Bloom, Mary Farrell, James Kemple, Nandita Verma.

The Family Transition Program: Final Report on Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program. 2000. Dan Bloom, James Kemple, Pamela Morris, Susan Scrivener, Nandita Verma, Richard Hendra.

Cross-State Study of Time-Limited Welfare

An examination of the implementation of some of the first state-initiated time-limited welfare programs.

Welfare Time Limits: An Interim Report Card. 1999. Dan Bloom.

Connecticut's Jobs First Program

An evaluation of Connecticut's statewide time-limited welfare program, which includes financial work incentives and requirements to participate in employment-related services aimed at rapid job placement. This study provides some of the earliest information on the effects of time limits in major urban areas.

Connecticut Post-Time Limit Tracking Study: Six-Month Survey Results. 1999. Jo Anna Hunter-Manns, Dan Bloom.

Jobs First: Implementation and Early Impacts of Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative. 2000. Dan Bloom, Laura Melton, Charles Michalopoulos, Susan Scrivener, Johanna Walter.

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Final Report on Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative. 2002. Dan Bloom, Susan Scrivener, Charles Michalopoulos, Pamela Morris, Richard Hendra, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Johanna Walter.

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project

An evaluation of Vermont's statewide welfare reform program, which includes a work requirement after a certain period of welfare receipt, and financial work incentives.

Forty-Two Month Impacts of Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project. 1999. Richard Hendra, Charles Michalopoulos.

WRP: Key Findings from the Forty-Two-Month Client Survey. 2000. Dan Bloom, Richard Hendra, Charles Michalopoulos.

Financial Incentives

Encouraging Work, Reducing Poverty: The Impact of Work Incentive Programs. 2000. Gordon Berlin.

Minnesota Family Investment Program

An evaluation of Minnesota's pilot welfare reform initiative, which aims to encourage work, alleviate poverty, and reduce welfare dependence.

Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program. 2000:

Volume 1: Effects on Adults. Cynthia Miller, Virginia Knox, Lisa Gennetian, Martey Dodoo, Jo Anna Hunter, Cindy Redcross.

Volume 2: Effects on Children. Lisa Gennetian, Cynthia Miller.

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Final Report on the Implementation and Impacts of the Minnesota Family Investment Program in Ramsey County. 2000. Patricia Auspos, Cynthia Miller, Jo Anna Hunter.

New Hope Project

A test of a community-based, work-focused antipoverty program and welfare alternative operating in Milwaukee.

New Hope for People with Low Incomes: Two-Year Results of a Program to Reduce Poverty and Reform Welfare. 1999. Johannes Bos, Aletha Huston, Robert Granger, Greg Duncan, Thomas Brock, Vonnie McLoyd.

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Canada's Self-Sufficiency Project

A test of the effectiveness of a temporary earnings supplement on the employment and welfare receipt of public assistance recipients. Reports on the Self-Sufficiency Project are available from: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), 275 Slater St., Suite 900, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9, Canada. Tel.: 613-237-4311; Fax: 613-237-5045. In the United States, the reports are also available from MDRC.

Does SSP Plus Increase Employment? The Effect of Adding Services to the Self-Sufficiency Project's Financial Incentives (SRDC). 1999. Gail Quets, Philip Robins, Elsie Pan, Charles Michalopoulos, David Card.

When Financial Work Incentives Pay for Themselves: Early Findings from the Self-Sufficiency Project's Applicant Study (SRDC). 1999. Charles Michalopoulos, Philip Robins, David Card.

The Self-Sufficiency Project at 36 Months: Effects of a Financial Work Incentive on Employment and Income (SRDC). 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, David Card, Lisa Gennetian, Kristen Harknett, Philip K. Robins.

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Mandatory Welfare Employment Programs

National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies

Conceived and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with support from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), this is the largest-scale evaluation ever conducted of different strategies for moving people from welfare to employment.

Do Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs Affect the Well-Being of Children? A Synthesis of Child Research Conducted as Part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (HHS/ED). 2000. Gayle Hamilton.

Evaluating Alternative Welfare-to-Work Approaches: Two-Year Impacts for Eleven Programs (HHS/ED). 2000. Stephen Freedman, Daniel Friedlander, Gayle Hamilton, JoAnn Rock, Marisa Mitchell, Jodi Nudelman, Amanda Schweder, Laura Storto.

Impacts on Young Children and Their Families Two Years After Enrollment: Findings from the Child Outcomes Study (HHS/ED). 2000. Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Kristin Moore, Suzanne LeMenestrel.

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Evaluating Two Approaches to Case Management: Implementation, Participation Patterns, Costs, and Three-Year Impacts of the Columbus Welfare-to-Work Program (HHS/ED). 2001. Susan Scrivener, Johanna Walter.

How Effective Are Different Welfare-to-Work Approaches? Five-Year Adult and Child Impacts for Eleven Programs– Executive Summary (HHS/ED). 2001. Gayle Hamilton, Stephen Freedman, Lisa Gennetian, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Anna Gassman-Pines, Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Surjeet Ahluwalia, Jennifer Brooks.

Los Angeles's Jobs-First GAIN Program

An evaluation of Los Angeles's refocused GAIN (welfare-to-work) program, which emphasizes rapid employment. This is the first in-depth study of a full-scale "work first" program in one of the nation's largest urban areas.

The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: First-Year Findings on Participation Patterns and Impacts. 1999. Stephen Freedman, Marisa Mitchell, David Navarro.

The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: Final Report on a Work First Program in a Major Urban Center. 2000. Stephen Freedman, Jean Knab, Lisa Gennetian, David Navarro.

Teen Parents on Welfare

Teenage Parent Programs: A Synthesis of the Long-Term Effects of the New Chance Demonstration, Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, and the Teenage Parent Demonstration (TPD). 1998. Robert Granger, Rachel Cytron.

Ohio's LEAP Program

An evaluation of Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, which uses financial incentives to encourage teenage parents on welfare to stay in or return to school.

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LEAP: Final Report on Ohio's Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents. 1997. Johannes Bos, Veronica Fellerath.

New Chance Demonstration
A test of a comprehensive program of services that seeks to improve the economic status and general well-being of a group of highly disadvantaged young women and their children.

New Chance: Final Report on a Comprehensive Program for Young Mothers in Poverty and Their Children. 1997. Janet Quint, Johannes Bos, Denise Polit.

Parenting Behavior in a Sample of Young Mothers in Poverty: Results of the New Chance Observational Study. 1998. Martha Zaslow, Carolyn Eldred, editors.

Focusing on Fathers

Parents' Fair Share Demonstration
A demonstration for unemployed noncustodial parents (usually fathers) of children on welfare. PFS aims to improve the men's employment and earnings, reduce child poverty by increasing child support payments, and assist the fathers in playing a broader constructive role in their children's lives.

Fathers' Fair Share: Helping Poor Men Manage Child Support and Fatherhood (Russell Sage Foundation). 1999. Earl Johnson, Ann Levine, Fred Doolittle.

Parenting and Providing: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Paternal Involvement. 2000. Virginia Knox, Cindy Redcross.

Working and Earning: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Low-Income Fathers' Employment. 2000. John M. Martinez, Cynthia Miller.

The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum. 2000. Eileen Hayes, with Kay Sherwood.

The Challenge of Helping Low-Income Fathers Support Their Children: Final Lessons from Parents' Fair Share. 2001. Cynthia Miller, Virginia Knox

Career Advancement and Wage Progression

Opening Doors to Earning Credentials
An exploration of strategies for increasing low-wage workers' access to and completion of community college programs.

Opening Doors: Expanding Educational Opportunities for Low-Income Workers. 2001. Susan Golonka, Lisa Matus-Grossman.

Welfare Reform and Community Colleges: A Policy and Research Context. 2002. Thomas Brock, Lisa Matus-Grossman, Gayle Hamilton.

Opening Doors: Students' Perspectives on Juggling Work, Family, and College. 2002. Lisa Matus-Grossman, Susan Gooden.

Education Reform

Accelerated Schools
This study examines the implementation and impacts on achievement of the Accelerated Schools model, a whole-school reform targeted at at-risk students.

Evaluating the Accelerated Schools Approach: A Look at Early Implementation and Impacts on Student Achievement in Eight Elementary Schools. 2001. Howard Bloom, Sandra Ham, Laura Melton, Julienne O'Brien.

Career Academies
The largest and most comprehensive evaluation of a school-to-work initiative, this study examines a promising approach to high school restructuring and the school-to-work transition.

Career Academies: Building Career Awareness and Work-Based Learning Activities Through Employer Partnerships. 1999. James Kemple, Susan Poglinco, Jason Snipes.

Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Engagement and Performance in High School. 2000. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.

Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Initial Transitions to Post-Secondary Education and Employment. 2001. James Kemple.

First Things First
This demonstration and research project looks at First Things First, a whole-school reform that combines a variety of best practices aimed at raising achievement and graduation rates in both urban and rural settings.

Scaling Up First Things First: Site Selection and the Planning Year. 2002. Janet Quint.

Project GRAD
This evaluation examines Project GRAD, an education initiative targeted at urban schools and combining a number of proven or promising reforms.

Building the Foundation for Improved Student Performance: The Pre-Curricular Phase of Project GRAD Newark. 2000. Sandra Ham, Fred Doolittle, Glee Ivory Holton.

LILAA Initiative
This study of the Literacy in Libraries Across America (LILAA) initiative explores the efforts of

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five adult literacy programs in public libraries to improve learner persistence.

So I Made Up My Mind: Introducing a Study of Adult Learner Persistence in Library Literacy Programs. 2000. John T. Comings, Sondra Cuban.

"I Did It for Myself": Studying Efforts to Increase Adult Learner Persistence in Library Literacy Programs. 2001. John Comings, Sondra Cuban, Johannes Bos, Catherine Taylor.

Toyota Families in Schools

A discussion of the factors that determine whether an impact analysis of a social program is feasible and warranted, using an evaluation of a new family literacy initiative as a case study.

An Evaluability Assessment of the Toyota Families in Schools Program. 2001. Janet Quint.

Project Transition

A demonstration program that tested a combination of school-based strategies to facilitate students' transition from middle school to high school.

Project Transition: Testing an Intervention to Help High School Freshmen Succeed. 1999.Janet Quint, Cynthia Miller, Jennifer Pastor, Rachel Cytron.

Equity 2000

Equity 2000 is a nationwide initiative sponsored by the College Board to improve low-income students' access to college. The MDRC paper examines the implementation of Equity 2000 in Milwaukee Public Schools.

Getting to the Right Algebra: The Equity 2000 Initiative in Milwaukee Public Schools. 1999. Sandra Ham, Erica Walker.

School-to-Work Project

A study of innovative programs that help students make the transition from school to work or careers.

Home-Grown Lessons: Innovative Programs Linking School and Work (Jossey-Bass Publishers). 1995. Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp, Joshua Haimson.

Home-Grown Progress: The Evolution of Innovative School-to-Work Programs. 1997. Rachel Pedraza, Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp.

Employment and Community Initiatives

Jobs-Plus Initiative

A multi-site effort to greatly increase employment among public housing residents.

Mobilizing Public Housing Communities for Work: Origins and Early Accomplishments of the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. James Riccio.

Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Jobs-Plus Site-by-Site: An Early Look at Program Implementation. 2000. Edited by Susan Philipson Bloom with Susan Blank.

Building New Partnerships for Employment: Collaboration Among Agencies and Public Housing Residents in the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 2001. Linda Kato, James Riccio.

Neighborhood Jobs Initiative

An initiative to increase employment in a number of low-income communities.

The Neighborhood Jobs Initiative: An Early Report on the Vision and Challenges of Bringing an Employment Focus to a Community-Building Initiative. 2001. Frieda Molina, Laura Nelson.

Connections to Work Project

A study of local efforts to increase competition in the choice of providers of employment services for welfare recipients and other low-income populations. The project also provides assistance to cutting-edge local initiatives aimed at helping such people access and secure jobs.

Designing and Administering a Wage-Paying Community Service Employment Program Under TANF: Some Considerations and Choices. 1999. Kay Sherwood.

San Francisco Works: Toward an Employer-Led Approach to Welfare Reform and Workforce Development. 2000. Steven Bliss.

Canada's Earnings Supplement Project

A test of an innovative financial incentive intended to expedite the reemployment of displaced workers and encourage full-year work by seasonal or part-year workers, thereby also reducing receipt of Unemployment Insurance.

Testing a Re-employment Incentive for Displaced Workers: The Earnings Supplement Project. 1999. Howard Bloom, Saul Schwartz, Susanna Lui-Gurr, Suk-Won Lee.

MDRC Working Papers on Research Methodology

A new series of papers that explore alternative methods of examining the implementation and impacts of programs and policies.

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Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Estimating Program Impacts on Student Achievement Using "Short" Interrupted Time Series. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Using Cluster Random Assignment to Measure Program Impacts: Statistical Implications for the Evaluation of Education Programs. 1999. Howard Bloom, Johannes Bos, Suk-Won Lee.

Measuring the Impacts of Whole School Reforms: Methodological Lessons from an Evaluation of Accelerated Schools. 2001. Howard Bloom.

The Politics of Random Assignment: Implementing Studies and Impacting Policy. 2000. Judith Gueron.

Modeling the Performance of Welfare-to-Work Programs: The Effects of Program Management and Services, Economic Environment, and Client Characteristics. 2001. Howard Bloom, Carolyn Hill, James Riccio.

A Regression-Based Strategy for Defining Subgroups in a Social Experiment. 2001. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.

Extending the Reach of Randomized Social Experiments: New Directions in Evaluations of American Welfare-to-Work and Employment Initiatives. 2001. James Riccio, Howard Bloom.

About MDRC

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization. We are dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through our research and the active communication of our findings, we seek to enhance the effectiveness of social policies and programs. MDRC was founded in 1974 and is located in New York City and Oakland, California.

MDRC's current projects focus on welfare and economic security, education, and employment and community initiatives. Complementing our evaluations of a wide range of welfare reforms are new studies of supports for the working poor and emerging analyses of how programs affect children's development and their families' well-being. In the field of education, we are testing reforms aimed at improving the performance of public schools, especially in urban areas. Finally, our community projects are using innovative approaches to increase employment in low-income neighborhoods.

Our projects are a mix of demonstrations — field tests of promising program models — and evaluations of government and community initiatives, and we employ a wide range of methods to determine a program's effects, including large-scale studies, surveys, case studies, and ethnographies of individuals and families. We share the findings and lessons from our work — including best practices for program operators — with a broad audience within the policy and practitioner community, as well as the general public and the media.

Over the past quarter century, MDRC has worked in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada. We conduct our projects in partnership with state and local governments, the federal government, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.

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